schools in advanced Western European countries. Moreover, there were close ties between Russian and Western European science. It was common for Russian youths graduating from a university to complete their education abroad—in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland.

In the world of science, literature, and the arts, Russia was undeniably a Great Power. Its intelligentsia was outstanding not only for the quality of its education but also for its political idealism. In familiarity with foreign languages, foreign literature, and the arts, and in the extent of its travel abroad, the Russian intelligentsia was the most international in Europe—indeed, too international, too different from the common people of its own country in language, tastes, way of life, attire. The weakness of the intelligentsia lay in the lack of cohesion and mutual understanding between the "educated" and "non-educated" classes of the nation.

Part of the priceless cultural heritage that had fallen into the hands of the Communists was destroyed or dissipated in the terrible years of civil war, but gradually the new rulers of the nation learned to appreciate the "experts" and made full use of them in building the new economy.

Another myth that prevents a clear understanding of the nature of Communism is the legend that the Communists—and their predecessors, the Bolsheviks—played a decisive role in overthrowing Tsarism in Russia.

True, the political system in old Russia was obsolete and incompatible with the level of its cultural and economic development and the demands of its further progress. The country was run by an incompetent and corrupt bureaucracy, ready to side with landlords against peasants and with employers against workers. The "national" character of the regime was manifest in the oriental pageantry of Palace and Church and in the oppression of national and religious minorities, especially the Jews. But the repugnant features of this regime were offset to some extent by its weakness. The intellectuals traditionally opposed the government, and great Russian literature, with a few conspicuous exceptions such as Dostoevsky, was essentially liberal. The universities were hotbeds of liberalism. Most of the newspapers were liberal—they had to be, since their readers expected them to be critical of the government. Liberal and radical ideas were spreading more and more widely among the workers and the middle classes.

Reaction had held a firm grip over the nation under Alexander III, a rough and cruel despot. But the regime began to crack under his successor, Nicholas II, a timid and feeble-minded weakling who trusted nobody, surrounded himself with charlatans and adventurers, and brought the dynasty to an ignominious end. Thus Russia found